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ABSTRACT

Five western Pennsylvania state colleges developed a consortium agreement, WES.C.T.E.C. (Western State College's Teacher Education Center), to operate a teaching center at the district's Centennial Elementary School. The purpose of the teaching center was to involve elementary education students in a year-long field experience in which methodology courses (teaching of reading, language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics) were combined with field experiences and student teaching. Methodology courses were organized by subject-matter specialists from each of the five colleges, and continuing efforts were made to correlate concepts presented in the seminars to corresponding competency needs of the classroom. The student field-experience activities were organized on a progressive scale. They began with observations, then teacher-aide activities; proceeded to tutorial activities and small-group teaching sessions; and finally evolved into full teaching functions. Each student was assigned to six different classrooms during the school year. The first assignment was concerned with nonstudent teaching experiences, and the second through the sixth assignments were progressively concerned with student teaching responsibilities. The college students assembled for biweekly practicums which focused on methodology and content. Feedback was obtained from the student at seminars and practicums and from student surveys and interviews. (Author/JA)

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WESTERN STATE COLLEGE'S TEACHER EDUCATION CENTER

WES.C.T.E.C.

Submitted To

The American Association of Colleges For Teacher Education

by

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PART I - SUMMARY

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In 1972, the five Western Pennsylvania State Colleges: California State College, Clarion State College, Edinboro State College, Indiana University, Slippery Rock State College and the McKeesport School District developed a consortium agreement, WES.C.T.E.C. (Western State College's Teacher Education Center), to operate a teaching center at the district's Centennial Elementary School.

The purpose of the teaching center was to involve elementary education students in a year long field experience in which methodology courses, i.e., teaching of reading, teaching of language arts, teaching of social studies, teaching of science, and teaching of mathematics were combined with field experiences and student teaching.

Thirteen college students from the five colleges began their one-year experience during the first week in September, 1973. They were initiated into the program with a series of orientation meetings. The school principal, instructional leader, and college personnel directed the meetings.

Methodology courses were organized by a subject-matter specialist from each of the five colleges and continuing efforts were made to correlate concepts presented in the seminars to corresponding competency needs of the classrooms.

The student field-experience activities were organized on a progressive scale. They began with observations, then teacher-aide activities, proceeding to tutorial activities, small group teaching sessions and finally evolving into full teaching functions.

Each student was assigned to six different classrooms during the school year. The first assignment was concerned with non-student teaching experiences and the second through the sixth assignments were progressively concerned with student teaching responsibilities.

The college students assembled for bi-weekly practicums which focused on methodology and content. The practicums were conducted by the consortium coordinator and college resource persons. Both the principal and instructional leader frequently participated in the practicums.

PART II

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I. Description and Development of the Program

In 1972, the Deans of the Schools of Education, the Directors of Student Teaching, the Department Chairmen of Elementary Education of the five Western Colleges, and School Administrators of the McKeesport, Pennsylvania, School District met several times to develop the design for the WES.T.E.C. consortium and to effect an agreement for the program.

II. Objectives

The following objectives were formulated:

A. Within the Centennial Elementary School setting the students were involved in a year-long experience in which methodology courses were combined with field experiences and student teaching.

1. The students had to relate concepts and skills from methodology seminars to appropriate competencies in the classroom.
2. The students had to consider theoretical concepts and relate them to practical situations.

B. The systems approach to teacher education was experienced by the students since all components of the teaching task operated in the school setting.

C. The college students became a part of a viable model of teacher education; however, they were able to modify the parameters of the model somewhat during the shcool year.

D. College students were afforded the opportunity to work in an urban setting with disadvantaged pupils.

E. The college students were able to work with pupils from different ethnic and racial backgrounds since there is a varied pupil population.

F. Public school personnel had the opportunity to be involved in the content delivery system.

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III. Personnel

Personnel involved in the McKeesport Consortium were: 23 professors from the five state colleges. These professors were deans, department chairmen and methodology professors. Personnel involved from the McKeesport School District included the principal, instructional leader, and approximately 20 classroom teachers within the Centennial School of McKeesport.

IV. Budget

The only financial support for the program was the college faculty commitment as a part of their regular teaching load (i.e., 1/4 load for five college faculty members for one semester and 1/2 load for the college coordinator for two semesters).

V. Contribution to the Improvement of Teacher Education

The following were considered to be contributions toward the improvement of the teacher education programs:

A. An integration of the on-campus and off-campus aspects of teacher education programs.

B. A movement toward the assumption of greater responsibility for the pre-service components of teacher education by the public schools, and for the in-service components by the university.

C. The integration of theoretical knowledge and practical study for the pre-service components of teacher education.

D. The emergence of new roles for teacher education personnel.

E. College students majoring in elementary education were involved in a professional year concept in a public school setting in which methodology courses were combined with field experiences and student teaching.

F. College students had the opportunity to relate concepts and skills from methodology seminars with field experiences and student teaching.

G. College students had the opportunity to work in an urban setting with economically disadvantaged pupils.

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H. College students were afforded the opportunity to work with pupils from different ethnic and racial backgrounds since there was a diverse pupil population.

I. Although the college students were a part of an experimental model of teacher education, they were able to somewhat modify the parameters since the model was dynamic in nature.

J. Several professionals from the five Western colleges and various administrators from the McKeesport, Pennsylvania, School District cooperatively worked together in formulating a model for teacher education that was predicated on the systems approach.

K. Special attention was given to competency-based teacher education, i.e., provisions were made to implement competencies from the subject-matter fields to the classrooms in the school.

L. Evaluation was a continuous process on the part of the supervising classroom teachers, public school administrators, college students and college professionals.

VI. Evaluation

Seminars and practicums provided the means for the coordinator and the professors to secure direct feed-back from the college students concerning the consortium. The reactions of the students were overwhelmingly positive, but with the number of people involved there were occasionally minor problems of communication and coordination. The students were surveyed at the mid-point of the program. The following questions were posed:

A. Do you like the program? YES NO

Comment:

B. What do you consider to be the strong points of the program?

C. What do you think the weak aspects of the program are?

D. Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

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All of the college students answered affirmatively to the first question and were conclusively positive in answering the other questions. It is quite possible, however, that the "Hawthorne Effect" did influence the student attitudes toward the program.

At the end of the program each student was briefly interviewed pertaining to his reaction to the consortium. Again, the students were quite positive in their reactions.

During the school year a series of meetings were held involving the supervising teachers, the building principal, the instructional leader and the coordinator. Evaluation focused not only on the past effectiveness of the program but upon a means to improve it. The preponderance of evaluative reaction was favorable. Additionally the supervising teachers were surveyed at the end of the year and the following questions were asked:

A. Do you like the program?

   Comment:

B. What do you consider to be the strong points of the program?

C. What do you think the weak aspects of the program are?

D. Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

All of the supervising teachers answered affirmatively to the first questions and were very positive and constructive in answering the other questions.

The curriculum specialists and coordinator met twice during the school year for the purpose of evaluation. Although the evaluative reactions were very positive, there was some concern expressed with the lack of communication at times, problems relating to coordination, and the physical impossibility of transporting science equipment from the college to the Centennial School; however, these concerns were resolved.

Finally, a C.B.T.E. (Competency Based Teacher Education) Planning Workshop held at Seven Springs, Pennsylvania, provided considerable feed-back pertaining

to the McKeesport Consortium. The Western State Teacher Education Center received a grant from the Pennsylvania State Department of Education to focus on Competency Based Teacher Education. Four working groups developed generic competencies for teacher education along with evaluative criteria, terminal objectives of the elementary education program, and assessment of changed behavior. Since each working group was composed of professionals who had been involved in the consortium, college students, and parents, the consortium model helped to predicate the outcome of the workshop. "A Plan for the Development of an Inventory of Specialized Competencies in Elementary Education" was developed by the participants at the Seven Springs Consortium Workshop. These competencies were compiled in booklet form and presented to the State Department of Education to be distributed to Colleges throughout the Commonwealth as examples of competency development in elementary education.

WES.C.T.E.C. has continued its program during the 1974-75 school term. An added dimension this year is an attempt to apply the competencies developed in the workshop to the program. Progress is being made in this area by applying the developed competencies to the WES.C.T.E.C. experience.

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